

The President's Daily Brief

24 June 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

24 June 1971

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's senior negotiator at the Paris talks, is scheduled to return to Paris today after an absence of over a year. (Page 1)

On Page 2 we review the latest developments in the fighting northeast of Phnom Penh.

In Laos, the Communists are shifting their forces to meet the threat from Vang Pao's irregulars on the Plaine des Jarres. (Page 3)

On Page 4 we discuss Chou En-lai's relatively conciliatory comments to US newsmen earlier this week.

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Pakistan

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King Husayn says he will request a UN Security Council meeting on Jerusalem next month. (Page 6)

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NORTH VIETNAM

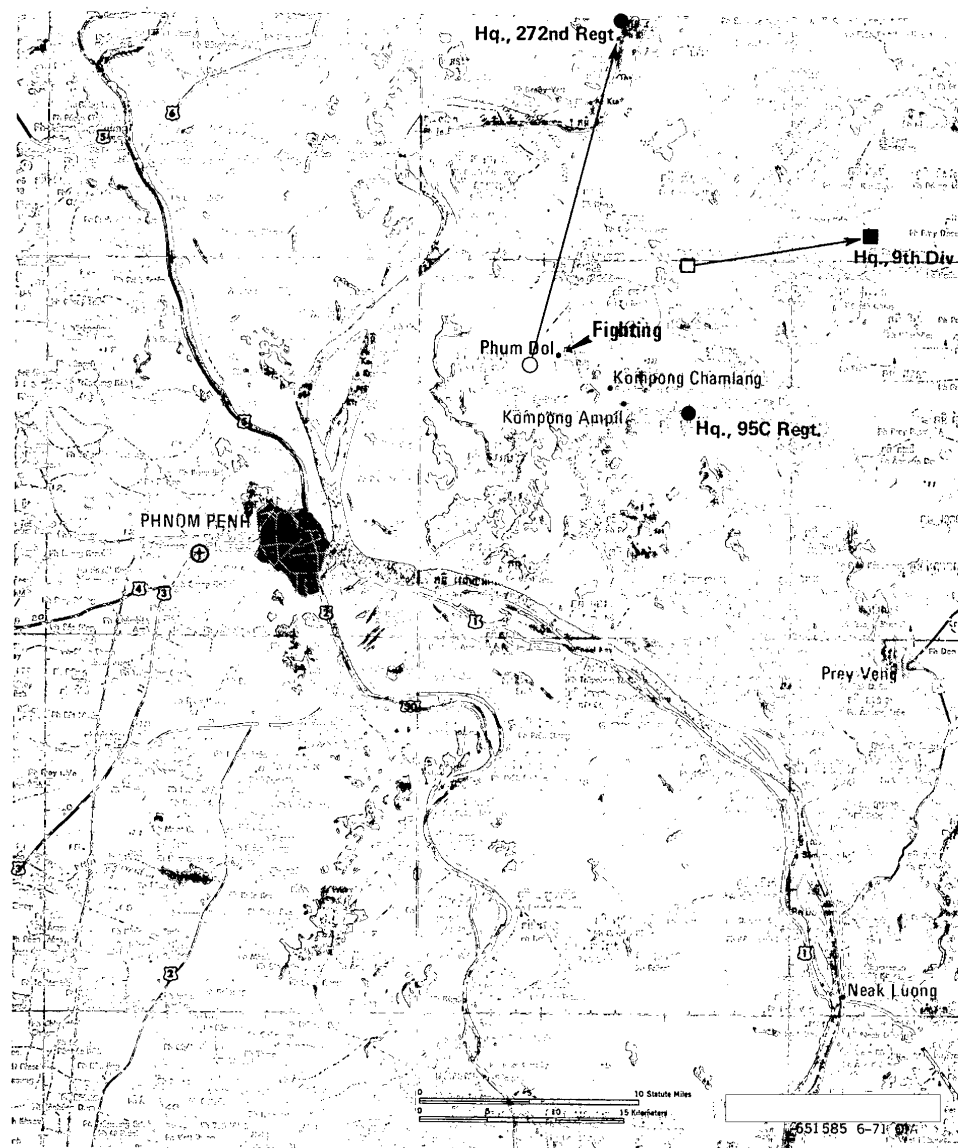
Le Duc Tho, Hanoi's senior negotiator at the Paris talks, will return to Paris today after an absence of over a year, according to a statement to newsmen yesterday by the North Vietnamese delegation. Tho was said to be going in his role as "special adviser" to the delegation; it was not stated how long he would stay.

Tho, a politburo member, participated in the negotiations in late 1968 that led to the US bombing halt and to the expanded quadripartite format at the talks. In February 1970, after an absence of seven months, Tho returned to Paris for the French party congress and stayed on for nine weeks, but nothing of consequence emerged at the talks. For the past few days he has been in Moscow, seemingly on his way back to Hanoi from the East German party congress.

Tho's return to Paris comes at a time when the North Vietnamese are most unlikely to believe there is any prospect of nudging the talks forward in some meaningful way. His return might be part of Hanoi's effort to encourage American critics of US policy who argue that setting a troop withdrawal date is the way to end US involvement in Vietnam and to free American prisoners. Now that the US Senate has passed a resolution calling for a troop withdrawal deadline linked to release of the prisoners, the Communists may be ready to float a more specific commitment to release prisoners in response to curtailment of US involvement in Vietnam. Hanoi might calculate that such an offer would place the Nixon administration in an awkward position, stimulate support for a withdrawal deadline, and have an unsettling effect in South Vietnam.

On the other hand, Tho may simply sit still in Paris as he did early last year in the hope that his mere presence will be enough to generate fresh pressures on Washington and Saigon.

Phnom Penh Area



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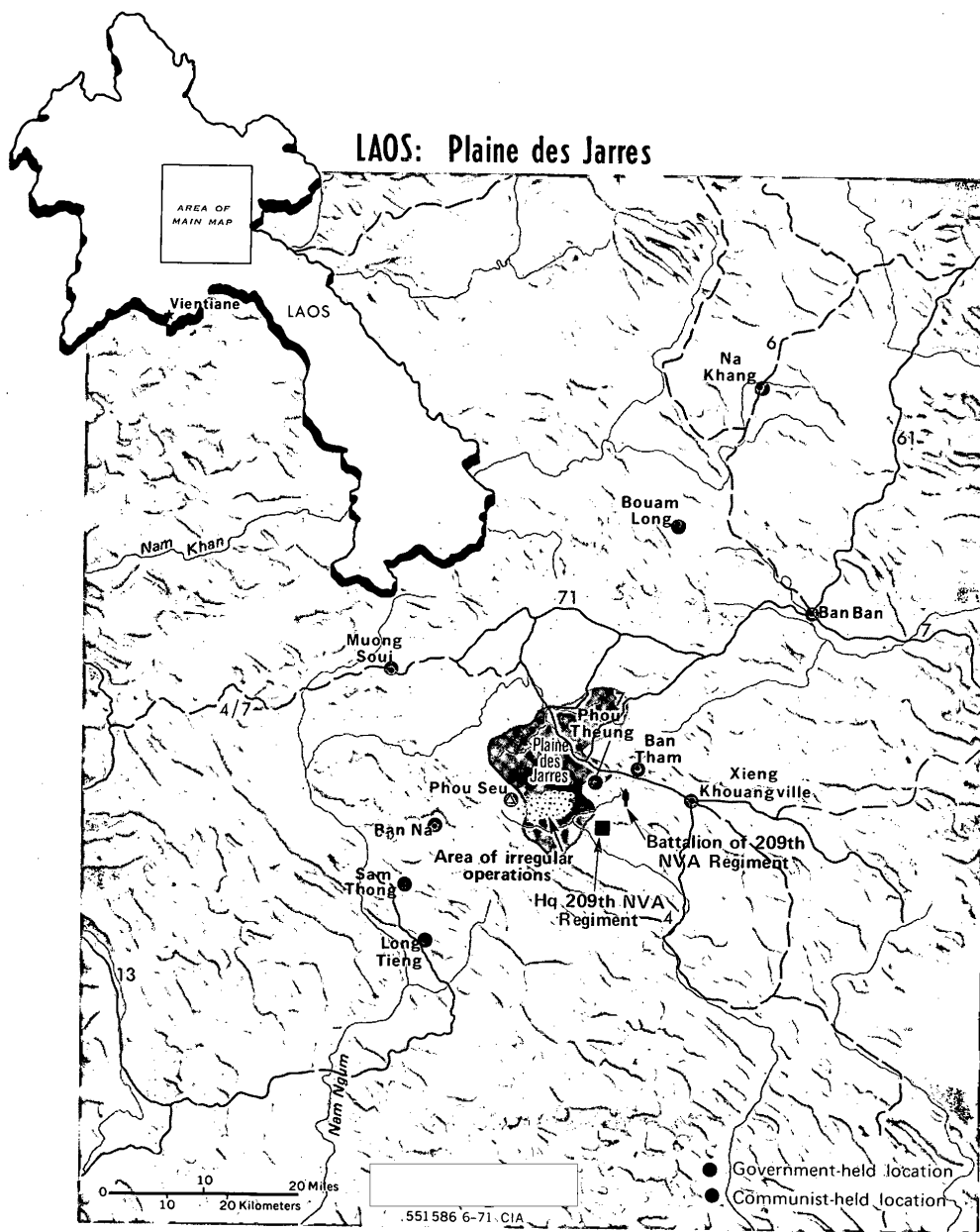
CAMBODIA

Northeast of Phnom Penh, troops from a Khmer Krom brigade linked up with elements of the two besieged government battalions at Kompong Chamlang yesterday. Before breaking through, however, they encountered stiff resistance near the village of Phum Dol, a few miles northwest of Kompong Chamlang. The two government battalions at nearby Kompong Ampil abandoned their positions on 20 June and moved to Kompong Chamlang.

Preliminary casualty reports say six government troops were killed and some 60 wounded--including a Khmer Krom regimental commander--in fighting on 22 and 23 June. Communist losses were estimated to be nearly 150 killed.

The Khmer Krom troops evidently occupied the former command post of the 272nd Regiment of the Communist 9th Division near Phum Dol yesterday, capturing munitions and other supplies. According to radio direction finding, the 272nd's headquarters has moved to Kompong Cham Province, some 15 miles north of Phum Dol.

Radio direction finding shows that the headquarters of the 9th Division has now moved some ten miles northeast of the Kompong Chamlang - Kompong Ampil sector, but its subordinate 95C Regiment apparently is still in a position to oppose the government drive if the Communists are determined to prolong their month-old offensive northeast of Phnom Penh.



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LAOS

The Communists are making some shifts in their forces east of the Plaine des Jarres to meet the threat from Vang Pao's irregulars now on Phou Theung mountain. An intercept of 19 June indicates that the North Vietnamese 316th Division plans to establish a "command section" in the Ban Tham area. A battalion from the 312th Division's 209th Regiment has also moved to a position east of the Plaine, near its regimental headquarters.

Intercepts in early May had suggested that the 209th might be pulling out of Laos, but the new location of these elements puts them in position to support any North Vietnamese counterattack on Vang Pao's irregulars.

Irregular units have moved northward in recent days to take several high ground positions in the south-central Plaine and have also destroyed numerous enemy supply caches. Vang Pao's moves onto the Plaine are intended in part to protect the flank of other units that have been trying to take Phou Seu on the Plaine's western edge. In addition to such tactical considerations, he seems to feel he has a mandate from Souvanna Phouma and King Savang to retake as much territory as possible.

Souvanna and the King view gains in the north as compensation for setbacks in the south and as having the effect of strengthening the government's negotiating position.

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COMMUNIST CHINA - US

Chou En-lai's comments to American newsmen in Peking Monday on Sino-US relations, while offering nothing substantively new, were presented in the most conciliatory tone since the "Bandung" days of the mid-1950s.

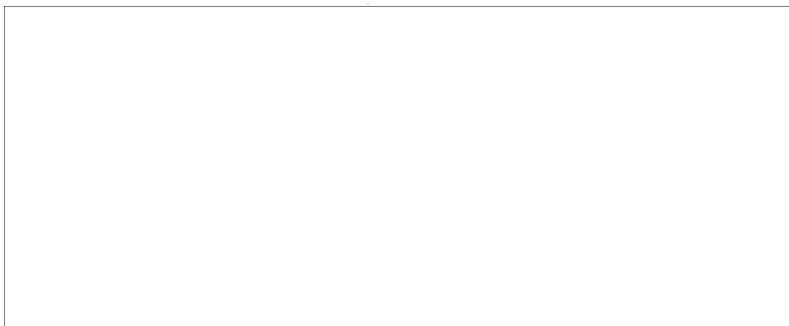
Chou focused on the American military presence on Taiwan and in the Taiwan Strait as the key problem between China and the US. If US forces were withdrawn and Washington no longer "considers Chiang Kai-shek the representative of China," he said, all other problems would be solved and the establishment of diplomatic relations with Washington would follow. It would not even be necessary, according to Chou, for the US to acknowledge Peking's sovereignty over Taiwan because a US withdrawal from the island would be "tacit recognition" of the People's Republic as the only lawful Chinese government. Chou reaffirmed Peking's rejection of any "two Chinas, or one China one Taiwan" formulations.

Chou's approach to Sino-US differences was meant to suggest that these differences are relatively narrow and could be resolved without a complete overturn of US positions. For example, he studiously avoided mention of the US defense treaty with Nationalist China. Chou said that Sino-US contacts would continue to develop--at least at the unofficial level--even in the absence of an agreement on Taiwan. He stated that a Chinese table tennis team was preparing to be the first delegation to go to the US, and that his government was also considering sending the Peking Opera Ballet.

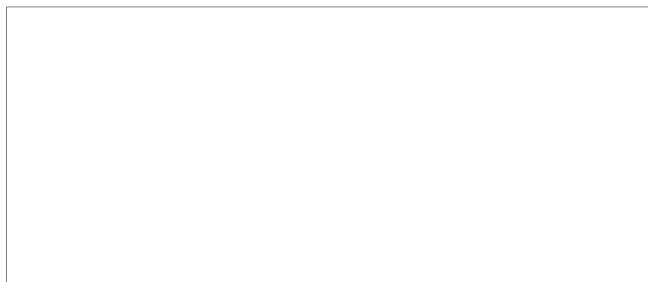
While trying to improve further the atmospherics surrounding Sino-US bilateral issues, Peking clearly is not giving anything away on the Taiwan issue, and Chinese public and private statements make it clear that this issue will remain China's first order of business with the US.

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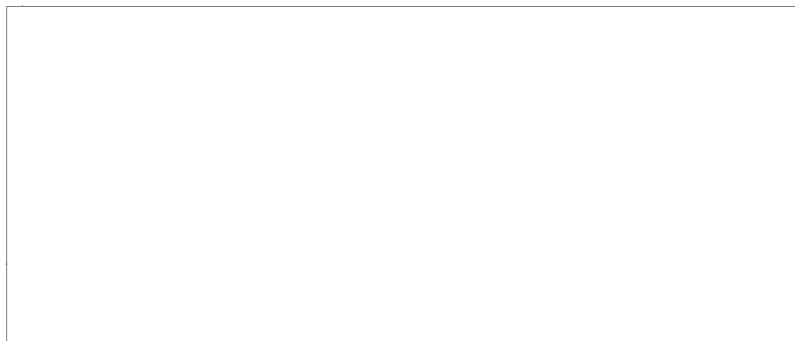
PAKISTAN



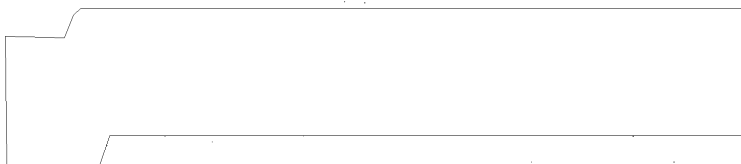
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JORDAN-ISRAEL

King Husayn [redacted]
[redacted] will request a UN Security Council meeting on the
Jerusalem situation next month, [redacted]
[redacted]. He said that Spain has agreed to
present the case, and that the French, whose repre-
sentative will preside in July, will also back Jor-
dan. The King claims assurances of Vatican support,
too.

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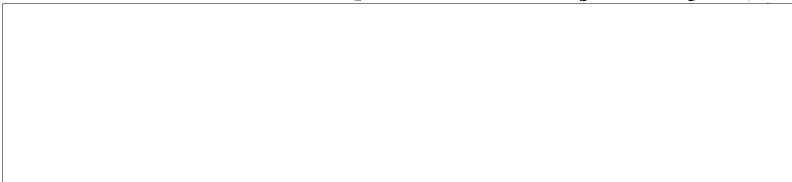
*An extensive airing of the question, whether
or not it resulted in a condemnation of
Israel, is not likely to alter Israel's
fundamental policy of integrating Arab
Jerusalem into Israel and would probably
stiffen Israel's unyielding position con-
cerning arrangements leading to a peace
settlement.*

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NOTE

USSR: The Soviets may plan to recover the Soyuz 11 spacecraft tomorrow after setting an endurance record of 19 days for manned spaceflight.

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